CONFERENCE ON DISARMAMENT

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FINAL RECORD OF THE EIGHT HUNDRED AND NINETY-SECOND PLENARY MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Thursday, 7 February 2002, at 10.15 a.m.

President: Mr. Mohamed Tawfik (Egypt)

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The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I declare open the 892nd plenary meeting of the Conference on Disarmament.

At the outset, I should like to express my appreciation to one of our esteemed colleagues, Ambassador Clive Pearson of New Zealand, whose assignment as the representative of his country at the Conference on Disarmament has recently come to an end.

Ambassador Pearson joined the Conference on Disarmament in 1997 and has represented his country with consummate diplomatic skill. His deep commitment to resolving the outstanding issues relating to the Conference's programme of work has made a positive impact that has been acknowledged by all. We shall remember Ambassador Pearson in particular for the vital role that he played during the 2000 NPT Review Conference in efforts to reach consensus on the practical steps to be taken towards implementation of article 6 of the Non-Proliferation Treaty. It has been my personal privilege to work and cooperate with Ambassador Pearson in more than one forum, since our two States belong to a group of countries which take a special interest in questions of nuclear disarmament. I should also like to express my deep appreciation of the hard work and great skills which he has deployed.

Ambassador Pearson has left an indelible mark on the disarmament process. On behalf of the Conference on Disarmament, and on my own behalf, I should like to wish him every success and happiness in the future. I should also like to extend a warm welcome to the Permanent Representative of New Zealand, Ambassador Tim Caughley and assure him of our full cooperation as he undertakes his duties.

I have the following speakers on my list for today: Ambassador Hu of China, Ambassador Broucher of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Ambassador Westdal of Canada, Ambassador Javits of the United States of America, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Ms. Anna Lindh.

I now give the floor to the Ambassador of China.

Mr. HU (China) (translated from Chinese): Mr. President, allow me, on behalf of the Chinese delegation, to congratulate you on your assumption of the first presidency of the 2002 session of the Conference and to express appreciation for your unremitting efforts to expedite the early commencement of substantive work in the Conference. It is my hope that, under your guidance, the Conference on Disarmament will be able to make a fresh start on a sound basis at this early stage in the year. I also wish to take this opportunity to convey our heartfelt thanks to Ambassador Roberto Betancourt Ruales for the valuable contribution that he made during his presidency.

As the sole multilateral negotiating body in the field of disarmament, the Conference on Disarmament serves as a barometer of the international political and security environment. This environment, in its turn, has a direct bearing on the Conference's work and progress. Let us not

(Mr. Hu, China)

deceive ourselves: the international arms control and disarmament process is currently facing a grave situation and is up against enormous difficulties. The ABM Treaty, which was recognized by the international community at the NPT 2000 Review Conference as the cornerstone of strategic stability, is about to be rendered null and void. The seven-year-long negotiations on a protocol to strengthen the BWC have been set at naught and the ad hoc group has suspended its work, its future uncertain. The CTBT has been rejected and its future prospects are dismal and there is now even a possibility that nuclear tests will resume. All this has inevitably had a negative impact on mutual trust among States and overall confidence in multilateral efforts in the field of arms control and disarmament.

Against this backdrop, we are deeply convinced of the need for the Conference on Disarmament to address such fundamental issues as the status and role of the existing legal regime for arms control and disarmament; the direction to be taken by international arms control and disarmament efforts; and the best means of establishing and preserving global strategic stability. This will undoubtedly help guide the Conference towards the future launching of its substantive work.

Arms control and disarmament are not the exclusive preserve of a mere handful of States; multilateral disarmament treaties are concluded through negotiations among a great many States and, as such, they embody the common will of the international community. Thanks to efforts conducted over the past decades on a global scale, a relatively comprehensive legal regime for international arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation has been put in place, covering nuclear, chemical, biological and certain types of conventional weapons. The treaties concluded during the cold war era, such as the NPT, ABM and BWC, and those concluded after the cold war, such as the CWC and CTBT, have all manifested humankind's relentless pursuit of international peace and security through arms control and disarmament. This legal regime has become an essential component of the global collective security structure centred on the United Nations and also plays a crucial role in maintaining global and regional security and stability. This role should be preserved and further enhanced.

Yet this legal regime is now confronted with unprecedented challenges, prominent among which are attempts to replace international cooperation with unilateral actions and the adoption of a politically expedient approach to international legal instruments in the interests of one country's own "absolute security". As a result, we have witnessed such developments as the abrogation of the ABM Treaty - the very cornerstone of international strategic stability; the pursuit of self-interest and the application of double standards in non-proliferation issues; the adoption by a country of a strict position to others in matters of treaty compliance, but a lenient one to itself, to the extent of passing domestic legislation which distorts the obligations provided for in international treaties; insistence on the speedy conclusion of a treaty with an extremely strict verification regime during negotiations, followed by a volte-face on conclusion of the treaty and categorical refusal to ratify it. All these actions have not only eroded the stature and impartiality of international arms control and disarmament treaties, but also impaired confidence among States.

(Mr. Hu, China)

Given this new situation, it is the shared responsibility of the international community to preserve the integrity and the authority of the international arms control and disarmament system, as this system is of vital importance to maintaining international peace and security. Countries should work together to preserve and promote the system in a spirit of cooperation rather than confrontation, with the application of a uniform standard rather than double, or even multiple, standards and consistency in the adoption of their relevant policies and positions. Any conduct that seeks to undermine this legal regime will prove to be short-sighted and will only add to the uncertainty and unpredictability of the international security situation.

In December 2001, following the announcement of withdrawal from the ABM Treaty, President Jiang Zemin of China stressed to President Putin and President Bush how essential it was, in the current situation, to safeguard the international arms control and disarmament system and affirmed that China stood ready with the rest of the world to continue its efforts in maintaining international peace and stability. That stated position will continue to guide the efforts of my delegation.

Over the last two years, in the face of increasingly negative tendencies in international affairs, the Chinese delegation has repeatedly stressed that international arms control and disarmament endeavours are now at a difficult crossroad. Confronted with such a grave situation, we need to reflect on the future course to be followed by the arms control and disarmament process.

In our view, the future course and objectives of the arms control and disarmament process should be as follows: preservation of global strategic stability; consolidation, development and promotion of the existing treaty system in the realm of arms control and disarmament; prevention of the introduction of weapons or weapon systems into outer space; complete prohibition and total destruction of all nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction; and non-proliferation of such weapons and their means of delivery.

Certain basic requirements must be met for the above objectives to be attained. First, a new concept of security based on mutual trust, mutual benefit, equality and cooperation should be established. The cold war mentality and power politics should be eschewed and disputes between States should be settled through dialogue and cooperation. Disarmament is aimed at enhancing security and that security must be enjoyed by all without exception. There can be no tranquillity in the world as a whole so long as the vast majority of developing countries are without security. Second, efforts should be made to strengthen cooperation in the field of global arms control and disarmament, not to weaken it; unilateral and expediency-based approaches in the field of arms control, disarmament and non-proliferation must be shunned. Arms control and disarmament should not be exploited as a tool whereby strong countries can control the small and the weak, or as a means for one country to optimize its military build-up so as to gain unilateral superiority. Nor should any one country be allowed to ensure its own absolute security at the expense of the security of others. If a common understanding can be reached on these basic points, the confidence and trust of States and their willingness to work together can be restored and the global arms control and disarmament process can be guided out of its current deadlock back on to the right track.

(Mr. Hu, China)

With the evolution of the international security situation and the increasing number of non-traditional threats from diverse sources, the existing international arms control and disarmament regime needs to be further strengthened and developed. Only through multilateral and collective cooperation can terrorism, the common enemy of the security of all countries, be eliminated. The healthy development of arms control and disarmament efforts will undoubtedly contribute to the global war against terrorism. This effort also requires multilateral cooperation, however, since its objective is to ensure collective security. It is our belief that the international arms control and disarmament process should continue to be centred on the negotiation and conscientious implementation of legally binding treaties. These treaties should be verifiable and be equipped among their basic elements with mechanisms dealing with non-compliance. The issuing by States of unilateral statements of a voluntary nature can only serve as a measure complementary to arms control and disarmament.

The ABM Treaty, which has helped underpin international strategic equilibrium and stability for almost 30 years, will soon be revoked. The question which must now urgently be addressed is how global strategic balance and stability are to be achieved and preserved in these new circumstances. In our view, the following principles and measures are of vital importance:

- A sustainable, strategic stability framework based on international legal mechanisms should be set in place and maintained;

- The negotiations between the Russian Federation and the United States of America on a new strategic framework should take into account the interests of every State and aim at ensuring common security. They should address the security concerns of all countries and should be open and transparent;

- The major nuclear Powers should make further cuts in their immense nuclear arsenals. These cuts should be verifiable and irreversible and achieved through legally binding instruments;

- The CTBT, which aims to promote nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation, should be respected and ratified and should enter into force;

- The nuclear-weapon States should continue to honour their commitment to mutual detargeting. Use of the "first-use policy" as a nuclear deterrence strategy should be abandoned;

- Measures should be taken to prevent the weaponization of an arms race in outer space.

Now that the ABM Treaty has been scrapped and efforts are being stepped up to develop missile defence and outer space weapon systems, there is an increasing risk of outer space being weaponized. Against this backdrop it is our view that the Conference on Disarmament should, in accordance with United Nations General Assembly resolution 56/23, establish an ad hoc committee on the prevention of an arms race in outer space with a negotiating mandate and

(Mr. Hu, China)

should conclude an international legal instrument on the issue at an early date. To this end, China has submitted a working paper entitled "Possible elements for the future international legal instrument on the prevention of the weaponization of outer space" in document CD/1645. We are ready to listen to comments and suggestions by all sides in a flexible and open-minded spirit. With regard to the mandate of the ad hoc committee on prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS), my delegation has submitted a paper on the issue contained in document CD/1576. We also continue to support the draft mandates on PAROS proposed by the Group of 21 and the delegation of the Russian Federation, which are contained in documents CD/1570 and CD/1644, respectively. We hope that, on this basis, the CD can resume its substantive work without further delay, including the launching of negotiations on such important issues as nuclear disarmament and a fissile material cut-off treaty.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I thank the Ambassador of China for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now call on the Ambassador of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Mr. David Broucher.

Mr. BROUCHER (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland): Mr. President, let me take the opportunity of this, my first statement to the Conference on Disarmament, to congratulate you on your assumption of the presidency of the Conference. I will not add to your burden by stressing the responsibility that lies on your shoulders as President, but I will assure you of the support of the delegation of the United Kingdom in bearing that burden and my own willingness to help in whatever way I can your efforts to move forward our work.

Let me also thank my colleagues in the Conference for the warmth and the cooperative spirit that I have experienced since my arrival in Geneva.

Before my arrival in Geneva last year, my previous involvement in disarmament issues had been in the early 1980s - a time when we were still mired in the stale disputes that characterized much of what passed for international negotiation during the cold war. It was with that in mind that, last year, in my first report to London as disarmament ambassador here, I said that I saw some important improvements in the arms control scene. Many others apart from me in this room know the value of the CWC, the NPT extension, the CTBT, the Ottawa Convention - to name only a few - because we remember times when they seemed out of reach. The Conference on Disarmament made its contribution to those important advances, and others, in the early and mid-1990s. I am glad that the United Kingdom was also able to use the historic changes in the 1990s to make some real advances in disarmament. Our unilateral reductions since the end of the cold war mean that the potential explosive power of Britain's operationally available nuclear warheads has been reduced by more than 70 per cent.

As the British Foreign Secretary, Jack Straw, said in a speech on this subject yesterday, arms control "has been one of the outstanding successes of international policy" of the last 50 years. But having made these important advances, the international community is now in danger of getting stuck again. The past 12 months have brought some successes -

(Mr. Broucher, United Kingdom)

one thinks of the agreement of a programme of action on small arms and the good results that we had at the end of 2001 from the CCW Review Conference. But we remember the past year as much for its disappointments - including the inability of the parties to the Biological Weapons Convention to agree to measures to strengthen that regime. Here in the Conference on Disarmament we remember our failure, for the third year running, to agree on a work programme. The momentum for progress in international arms control, so increased during the last decade, has been running down for those three years at least. We badly need to reinvigorate our work here and more generally.

Above all we must not risk squandering some of the achievements and agreements that our predecessors worked so hard to achieve. The world is in many ways a more dangerous and unpredictable place now than it was in the cold war. The possible use of weapons of mass destruction is more a real threat to civilian populations than has ever been the case before and this knowledge contributes to the sense of threat that people feel, and the risks that conflict entails.

It was my predecessor's privilege to be sitting where you are now when the Conference on Disarmament last adopted a programme of work, in 1998. The Conference has done no substantive work since then. By my calculation that means that ambassadors of the countries represented here have trooped into this room more than 70 times - and each time they have been unable to find a way out of the continuing impasse. They have not used facilities available to them from the United Nations for more then 2,000 hours of negotiation. It is no wonder that there is a tendency to keep, or to take, arms control initiatives out of the Conference on Disarmament.

Nor are the consequences confined to the Conference on Disarmament. In April, at its first session, the preparatory committee for the next Review Conference of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty will talk about the implementation of that treaty. It is disappointing that the Conference on Disarmament has not so far responded to the call of the last NPT Review Conference to begin negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, an utterly indispensable step for moving towards nuclear disarmament. And this is despite the fact that there has been international consensus on a negotiating mandate for such a treaty for more than six years. Jack Straw confirmed in his speech yesterday the United Kingdom's firm support for a fissile material cut-off treaty, and our determination that the Conference on Disarmament should overcome the road-blocks and move forward.

Over the last 12 months, the Amorim proposals have commanded the Conference's attention as the best opportunity for starting work. Since August 2000, nothing better has come along, nor does it look likely to. Indeed, nothing better is needed, in my country's view, since the Amorim proposals protect the vital interests of every country in this Conference. Obviously there are differences of view: in particular over whether there should be a treaty negotiation on outer space. But the best way to get an agreement on that would be to start the debate on it that

(Mr. Broucher, United Kingdom)

would take place in an ad hoc committee - as allowed for by the Amorim proposals. The United Kingdom is keen for the Conference on Disarmament to start work on its whole work programme.

In his statement yesterday, Jack Straw noted the despair in some quarters that "the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is inevitable, and that our only hope lies in deterrence, defence and, in the last resort, retaliation". It is true, he said, that "proliferation continues, often in States which reject internationally agreed standards of decency, and that this means we cannot afford to regard the existing body of arms control methods as comprehensive". New times and new challenges need new responses. But they do not make the old responses worthless. The United Kingdom has played an active role in the negotiation and implementation of arms control agreements. We will carry on doing so, in fields as diverse as the strengthening of the Biological Weapons Convention the forthcoming negotiation on explosive remnants of war and continuing work of the Preparatory Commission for the CTBTO and many more.

The work done by the Conference on Disarmament, and by these other institutions, has made the world safer. I am determined that the Conference on Disarmament should be active and should work to advance disarmament. The Conference is currently a bastion of procrastination and inactivity, and we must work together to change it into an effective vehicle for progress and real achievement.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I thank the representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I should now like to suspend the meeting in order to greet the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden and accompany her to the Council Chamber.

The meeting was suspended at 10.45 a.m. and resumed at 11 a.m.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): The plenary meeting is resumed. I now give the floor to the representative of Canada, Ambassador Christopher Westdal.

Mr. WESTDAL (Canada): Given your well-known expertise, Mr. President, your energy and your effectiveness and your professional and national commitment to the goals of our Conference, I am pleased indeed to congratulate you on your assumption and conduct to date of the presidency. You can count on Canada's support. We will do all we can to help in the search for consensus on a programme of work of value in multilateral non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament.

Be assured as well, Mr. President, that recalling our own efforts in your place a year ago, we harbour no illusions about your prospects - or the extent of your own personal responsibility for our inactivity - in the event that the combined visions and security postures of major players continue to preclude wholehearted multilateralism and the political will and the specific instructions we delegates need to be able to work here.

(Mr. Westdal, Canada)

The months since we last met, in the aftermath of 11 September 2001, have been eventful in our field, full of implications that we strive to understand. Some of them are no mystery. For a start, given that the explosive attack on the World Trade Towers was equivalent to less than 1,000 tonnes of TNT (with no radioactive fallout), it surely deepened our commitment to nuclear disarmament by reminding us what hideous damage thermonuclear megatons - thousands and thousands of TNT tonnes - would wreak.

Second, the attacks, along with subsequent proof that terrorists seek and will use anthrax and other means, have spurred urgent priority for the non-proliferation and the security of the materials of all weapons of mass destruction.

The attacks have also of course provoked forceful and effective self-defence by the United States, with massive political support from allies and partners, from the United Nations Security Council and from the world community. As to the more general threat of weapons of mass destruction, President Bush could not have made it clearer than he did when addressing the state of the Union: "The United States will not permit the world's most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world's most destructive weapons".

As profoundly, Mr. President, the attacks startled the human spirit, provoking a great wave of outrage and potent global sentiments of sympathy, of vulnerability and of solidarity, which have sustained the massive coalition against terror and have fostered historic new amity in major power relations.

Finally in this short list, the ubiquitous dangers of terrorism by weapons of mass destruction and the breadth and depth of international cooperation since 11 September have reminded us that no country, however weak or disorganized, however strong and able, is alone on this planet. We are all in this together, our fates intertwined. In the language of the First Committee last fall, multilateralism is a core principle of international security.

In theory, that is. In fact, in a recent survey of our field, the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, Jayantha Dhanapala, described and lamented what he called "the debris of multilateral disarmament endeavours". From the CTBT and the struggle to bring full legal force to its ban on nuclear testing to the BWC, the failure of its protocol negotiations and last December's derailed Review Conference; from the prospects for the fulfilment of the NPT 13 steps to the search for a post-ABM strategic framework and the context in which strategic arsenals might be cooperatively (and, ideally, transparently and irreversibly) reduced; and from a challenged IAEA to a cash-starved OPCW, there is a pervasive sense of crisis in our field. Part of it - a symptom not a cause (in that we do not write our own instructions) - is our lack of work.

Against this background, it is my purpose now to review several dimensions of our predicament and related prerequisites for the use of this Conference, including the vision which we need to prevail in the world if we are going to be able to get back to work here.

(Mr. Westdal, Canada)

I begin with a critical but regularly overlooked dimension of instruments of non-proliferation, foremost among them the NPT: and that is the credibility of the commitment to disarmament. The NPT's inherent discrimination is acceptable only in a larger context of coherent commitment and credible progress toward disarmament. Without article VI, the NPT would not exist - and without its fulfilment over time, the Treaty will lose its seminal value. It can be convenient to forget, but in our bedrock, the NPT, non-proliferation and disarmament are mutually interdependent. Whatever that means in precise numbers and dates, it has to mean a vision of a world free of arsenals capable of human extinction and it has to mean credible progress toward that goal. That is why Canada welcomed the strategic reductions in train and in prospect in the United States and Russia.

I think Under-Secretary-General Dhanapala was getting at the same truth about non-proliferation in his recent speech to the Arms Control Association in Washington, when he emphasized that multilateral cooperation in our field must be global and non-discriminatory, as well as fair and equitable, to have much chance of long-term success.

Non-proliferation is not cost-free, but its cost is well worth paying. There cannot for long be one rule for some and another for others. That is a truth we all know in our homes and our communities. It is the value in equality before the law, a surely essential dimension of political sustainability.

Mr. President, although 11 September was not we stress, a failure of arms control, a second prominent dimension of the current crisis in our field is obviously non-compliance. Indeed, the value of multilateral pacts is regularly dismissed by some on the grounds that some parties cheat. I think that argument, often presented as quasi-axiomatic, is no such thing. It bears scant scrutiny. We do not abandon the law when it gets broken. When that happens - indeed, precisely because that happens - we try harder to enforce it.

And when we find essential laws beyond our powers of multilateral enforcement, as now, and must rely instead on national power internationally reinforced, we ought not back away from those essential laws against weapons of mass destruction and the struggle to enforce them. We should much rather turn to that historical imperative with urgent new purpose and resolve.

And let us be honest about our work in multilateral compliance and enforcement: we have not lately been trying hard enough - or trying effectively enough - to strengthen our various treaties' monitoring and enforcement provisions, to promote their universal acceptance and to ensure that they have the resources which they need. The test ban is not in force, IAEA and OPCW are under-funded and the BWC is toothless. More generally, we have not scratched the surface of the robust potential of verification and have only just begun to take advantage of powerful new technologies available for enforcement.

And these days, when we think about the scope and the reach of our technologies and witness the unprecedented power of large and comprehensively integrated weapons systems and when we consider the consequences of their possible further elaborations, we should not

(Mr. Westdal, Canada)

overlook another great power, the power for human progress available through transparent accountability. It is an old engine of human progress, holding parties to their sworn word for all the world to see and mobilizing the threat or reality of exposure and shame to spur reform and change ways. Permanence with strengthened accountability, we should recall, was the basis of the indefinite extension of the NPT in 1995. Further deepened accountability through such means as, perhaps, enhanced reporting will be explored at the NPT Preparatory Committee in April - and beyond, in the Treaty's vital reviews.

In recent debate about means of non-proliferation, I have heard proposed enforcement regimes and measures dismissed on the grounds that they could not themselves provide guaranteed security. Let me put that straw man down. No one sensible ever said that these multilateral measures were in themselves sufficient. Each one of them is valuable and, combined, progressively more effective; they are essential and we need to go on strengthening them, but our recognition that they do no yet suffice, that they are not yet as effective as we need them to be, is perfectly clear in our support for supplementary measures ranging from export controls to military action against terrorism if and as need be. In other words, we already have what we may call "Multilateralism Plus", with the NPT plus UNSCOM, when needed, and the BWC and CWC plus export controls, and so on as need be in the face of utterly compelling threats of weapons of mass destruction.

Finally on this subject, allow me to say a few words about the risk that the law will serve the lawless. I believe that the playwright Robert Bolt, in A Man For All Seasons, gave Thomas More great lines on the subject. When More is challenged, "So now you'd give the Devil benefit of law!" he replies, "Yes. What would you do? Cut a great road through the law to get after the Devil?" His companion responds, "I'd cut down every law in England to do that!" And then More's point: "Oh? And when the last law was down, and the Devil turned round on you - where would you hide ..., the laws all being flat? This country's planted thick with laws from coast to coast - Man's laws, not God's - and if you cut them down - and you're just the man to do it - d'you really think you could stand upright in the winds that would blow then?" "Yes", More concludes, "I'd give the Devil benefit of the law, for my own safety's sake".

Mr. President, I endorse the calls that we have heard here for "new thinking". Indeed, without some - and it should be good - I believe that our prospects for useful work in this Conference will stay slim. Let me sketch from Canada's vantage-point the vision which, in our view, should prevail in the world if we are to fulfil our mandate here to prepare and negotiate legally-binding multilateral agreements.

The vision that we need to prevail must comprehend both necessary self-defence, like that under way today, and our common enduring need for multilateral institutions and international law as strong and as well-enforced as we can make them. It is clear - and it is right and fitting - that so long as our treaties and their enforcement cannot do the job, it must be done by others. It shall not knowingly be left undone.

(Mr. Westdal, Canada)

We know that we would only be fooling ourselves - at grave risk to our own security - were we to ignore the inadequacies of the current multilateral non-proliferation, arms control and disarmament system. At the same time, we know that for the long haul, given that sustained vigilance and effective law enforcement depend crucially on the full cooperation of national Governments and that such cooperation is best invoked through international law, the engagement of all States in collective, binding multilateralism is essential in countering ubiquitous weapons of mass destruction threats. Our pressing responsibility is to reinforce multilateral agreements and national capacities not yet up to the task.

Current multilateral arrangements are not at all wisely supposed to offer guarantees, 100 per cent effectiveness. Far from it. As Under-Secretary Bolton said here about challenge inspections, though, they do offer a measure of valuable confidence by promoting transparency and good behaviour, by deterring would-be violators and by providing a fact-finding tool to address compliance concerns. It needs to be recalled that any measure of security gained through multilateral enforcement is a measure which States need not feel so inclined to seek elsewhere through vastly more expensive arsenals.

Canada welcomed the recent plans and steps to reduce the size of nuclear arsenals and their operational readiness; those steps move us closer to disarmament and lessen the risk of nuclear war. That said, if they turn out not to be transparent, codified or irreversible, these strategic reductions could generate as much disappointment and suspicion as confidence.

We need a vision true to our deepest values to prevail. We need it to sanctify life itself and time and earth and human meaning in the clear light of their manifest, astonishing and surely sufficient divinities. In that light, massive nuclear arsenals hair-triggered to end all that we are for ever and to foul this planet too are a dark stain on our meaning, our dignity and our age, a stain which it should be our natural duty to remove.

We need a vision of human solidarity to prevail. There is more and deeper human unity on this planet now than there was on 10 September. We felt its force on 11 September and we have seen it at work since. These are not just passing shows of shared human sentiment and spirit. They are quite real, with immense long-term consequence. They have attended dramatic widespread realignments and solidarity against extremist security threats. We should want to work hard in multilateral settings to sustain and gain by this fresh momentum in global sentiment and solidarity, this felt quickening of the human spirit.

We should have no illusion that an inexorably interdependent world is going to be comfortable or readily managed, but it is surely clear that, among other measures across a range - from diplomacy and law enforcement to economic and military action - we need to make the very best we can of international law and progressively more effective multilateral structures with stronger and more broadly-based powers of enforcement.

(Mr. Westdal, Canada)

The vision needs to prevail that reciprocal transparency and intrusiveness are essential in effective multilateralism; all States must share both the burdens and the benefits of binding pacts. The vision which we need is inclusive and participatory, imbued with respect for the interests and opinions of each, while faithful to the common good, because survival will always be everybody's business. The vision which we need counts us all in, from the most powerful to the least, and it disciplines us all alike, from the least powerful to the most. In that vision, quests for national security are inseparable from quests for a sustainable security framework for all of us on earth. The phrase is well-worn for good reason: international security is indivisible.

In sum, the vision needs to prevail that sustainable global security is best sought - for the benefit of all, particularly the most powerful, who have the most to protect and have the means to gain the most - through inclusive, enfranchising multilateralism. As we human beings evolve - or not - such essential global coherence and as we get busy - or not - building the norms, attitudes and institutions required, Canada sees multilateral arms control and current national action not as conflicting imperatives but rather as essential and complementary dimensions of effective response to compelling threats of mass destruction.

Canada's positions on the various issues before this Conference are well known. It is our belief - reinforced in the course of our stint in the Chair this time last year - that the Amorim proposal remains our best hope. Because its consequence is our lack of work, we are constantly reminded that the one last gap in the Amorim programme (where verbs are still needed and not agreed) is to say just what we would do first on PAROS. But we should not let that small gap blind us to the programme's great potential for progress and momentum. The Amorim programme would engage all parties - earnestly, given the temper of these times - in this unique forum dealing multilaterally with nuclear disarmament, the prevention of an arms race in outer space, security assurances and fissile material negotiations. Such multilateral engagement of major players is central in the vision that I have sketched of sustainable security. Work like that in the Amorim programme would transform this Conference and win new ground for hope worldwide. (I should add here that Canada would be prepared to address missile issues as well, should this subject ever be added to our active agenda.) As to the chance for consensus, it is clear that priorities still vary, but the compromise required to get us to work has been clearly defined and painstakingly distilled. To my delegation, it does not appear immense.

Finally, Mr. President, we see value in the mandates and ongoing work of our three special coordinators. These are no substitute for substantive work, but they may facilitate progress once a work programme has been agreed.

Should the prospect of consensus agreement on a programme of work not be imminent, our responsibility remains to keep good custody of this unique institution, to make the best use we can of it to prepare for future work and to take pains to sustain the orientation and vantage, the focus and the disarmament expertise that it has gathered. We welcome reflection here on the search for multilateral security as a means to promote and prepare for negotiations. Discussion and debate deepen understanding. We can also usefully consider the political role of the Conference and whether it might add value in public information and education.

(Mr. Westdal, Canada)

We should remember that this Conference in which we are gathered is a tool of proven value, a shop that has delivered the goods before, global public goods, and can do so again. It is a poor workman that blames his tools, Mr. President, and a hapless tool that takes the rap.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I thank the representative of Canada for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I now give the floor to the representative of the United States of America, Ambassador Eric Javits.

Mr. JAVITS (United States of America): Mr. President, as a recent arrival to Geneva and a newcomer to duties in this body, I would like to express my appreciation to you, Mr. President, and to many other colleagues who have welcomed me in such warm and friendly ways. I assure you that I shall do everything I can to cooperate with your efforts in the presidency, and with theirs, to reinvigorate the Conference on Disarmament and begin fulfilling our primary task: negotiating global treaties in the field of arms control and disarmament.

Much of what I will say today has already been said by others, and I ask your indulgence if I echo sentiments often expressed here. Yet letting one another know where we stand is an indispensable element of seeking consensus in this august body.

So, to be perfectly blunt: after so many years of deadlock and delay, to waste yet another year would be an evasion of our collective responsibility. History may judge at what point this comatose body actually expired, or at what stage continued inaction became dereliction of duty or even inexcusable negligence. In any case, these questions would eventually arise.

I do not want them asked or answered. No, Mr. President, my Government and I want the Conference at long last to adopt a comprehensive programme of work along the lines proposed by one of your most distinguished predecessors, Ambassador Celso Amorim of Brazil.

Last 11 September, criminal terrorists carried out perfidious and appallingly destructive attacks in New York and Washington. Within the ensuing days and weeks, many countries joined with the United States in confronting and combating this assault on innocent civilians and on the fundamental tenets of civilization itself.

We deeply appreciated this demonstration of solidarity in the common cause. We are encouraged that there has been substantial progress in rooting out the al-Qa'ida network and that the oppressive Taliban regime has been overthrown. This has enabled the people of Afghanistan to form an interim Government that is far more attuned to their aspirations and needs.

History may eventually cite the 11 September events as a turning point in our mutual quest for a better world, since utter revulsion at the terrorist attacks created unprecedented patterns of cooperation among Governments and peoples.

(Mr. Javits, United States)

On 14 November, President Bush and President Putin issued a joint statement in which they declared that the United States and Russia "have overcome the legacy of the cold war", adding that "neither country regards the other as an enemy or threat". The two presidents cited their joint responsibility to contribute to international security, then said that the United States and Russia "are determined to work together, and with other nations and international organizations, including the United Nations, to promote security, economic well-being, and a peaceful, prosperous, free world".

On 13 December 2001, President Bush announced that the United States would withdraw from the 1972 ABM Treaty pursuant to its provisions that permit withdrawal after six months' notice. The United States knows with certainty that some States, including a number that have sponsored terrorist attacks in the past, are investing heavily to acquire ballistic missiles that could conceivably be used against the United States, its allies and its friends. Although this is an especially sinister development in and of itself, it is compounded by the fact that many of these same States, not content just to acquire missiles, are also seeking to develop chemical, biological and nuclear weapons of mass destruction. As President Bush emphasized last week in his state of the Union address, "We must prevent the terrorists and regimes who seek chemical, biological or nuclear weapons from threatening the United States and the world".

To reduce the possibility that missiles will be used as tools of coercion and aggression, the United States needs updated means of dissuasion. Judiciously limited missile defences do not just provide a shield against a stray missile or accidental launch; they are also an essential element of a strategy to discourage potential adversaries from seeking to acquire or use weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles - by removing the assurance that such weapons would have military utility.

History teaches us that, despite the best efforts of statesmen and strategists, intelligence gathering, diplomacy and deterrence measures, all of those will not always prove entirely effective. Missile defences will provide an insurance policy against the catastrophic effects of their failure, at least in relation to a handful of missiles that might be launched by accident, by a non-State actor, or by a State of particular concern.

The United States is now engaged in discussions with Russia on measures to verify reductions in nuclear warheads under the general framework established by the START I Treaty. I am confident that, in the coming months, greater attention will also be given to transparency, confidence-building measures, and expanded cooperation on missile defences. At the same time, there will also be more extensive joint work in the critically important field of non-proliferation. And the work we need to do in these regards will not be with Russia alone, by any means.

In discussions with a wide range of allies and friends, representatives of the United States Government have explained why we believe that moving beyond the ABM Treaty will contribute to international peace and security. Although the details of these discussions must of

(Mr. Javits, United States)

course remain private, we find it particularly significant that in mid-December representatives of the United States and China met in Beijing to review our withdrawal from the ABM Treaty and discuss the possible start of a broad strategic dialogue. The United States looks forward to further opportunities to explore strategic issues and appropriate methods for enhancing mutual understanding and confidence in the context of increasingly cooperative relations between the United States and China - as will be discussed on 21 and 22 February 2002, when President Bush visits Beijing at the invitation of Chinese President Jiang Zemin.

Some critics have interpreted the United States decision to withdraw from the ABM Treaty as evidence of so-called "unilateralism", in other words, a general lack of support for multilateral arms control agreements. This interpretation is lamentably mistaken.

The United States agrees that multilateralism is "a core principle in negotiations in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation with a view to maintaining and strengthening universal norms and enlarging their scope" - as stated in this year's General Assembly resolution 56/24 T. The resolution also underlined the fact that "progress is urgently needed in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation in order to help maintain international peace and security and to contribute to global efforts against terrorism", and we fully agree with that.

Certain other consensus resolutions of the General Assembly were even more directly aimed at the member States of the Conference on Disarmament. For example, resolution 56/24 J urged that the Conference on Disarmament agree on a programme of work that includes the immediate commencement of negotiations on a treaty that would ban the production of fissile material for use in nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices. In addition, resolution 56/26 B reaffirmed the role of the Conference on Disarmament as "the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum of the international community" and called on it "to fulfil that role in the light of the evolving international situation".

Let no one doubt that the United States values this Conference, and its role, as the only existing multilateral forum for arms control and disarmament negotiations. As Under-Secretary of State Bolton pointed out the United States supports and upholds many multilateral arms control agreements, such as, for example: the Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1967; the Outer Space Treaty, also of the same year; the Biological Weapons Convention of 1972; the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe of 1990; and the Chemical Weapons Convention of 1992.

Although maintaining international peace and security is our primary goal and overarching purpose, in the final analysis preserving national security is likewise necessary and essential. Mutual advantage is another key factor, for any arms control treaty must enhance the security of all States parties. Basic obligations need to be well-focused, clear and practical, so States will have a rational basis for committing themselves to the future treaty. Compliance and enforcement are priority issues and also quite critical. After all, unenforceable agreements that are easily ignored make no positive contribution whatever to international peace and security.

(Mr. Javits, United States)

To the contrary, ineffective treaties can create false illusions of security that may impede or prevent realistic and quite appropriate preparations for individual or collective self-defence. One cogent example is the treaties of the 1920s and 1930s that limited the tonnage of naval warships that States parties were permitted to build. Those treaties clearly failed the test, for certain States evaded the limits by building larger and more powerful warships than those which the negotiators envisaged.

In sum, Mr. President, arms control and disarmament approaches are not all equally effective. Furthermore, they are only a means to an end, a tool that States can choose to employ - or not - in our mutual efforts to ensure international peace and security. And just as a screwdriver would be a poor choice for a carpenter who needs to hammer in a nail, it is clear that arms control and disarmament approaches may not always be suited to the circumstances at hand.

So the issue is how this forum should be employed now, after years and years of paralysis. The work programme proposals that Brazilian Ambassador Amorim tabled on 24 August 2000, embodied in CD/1624, specified that the Conference would conduct negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty, pursuant to a thoughtful and complete framework that the international community has repeatedly reaffirmed - the so-called Shannon mandate and report, as drafted by former Canadian Ambassador Gerald Shannon, the Conference's Special Coordinator, and published on 24 March 1995 in CD/1299.

Ambassador Amorim also envisaged the establishment of ad hoc committees on two other high-priority topics, nuclear disarmament and outer space. In contrast, however, he proposed broad-ranging discussion of these other two high-priority topics, not treaty negotiations. This, of course, is the only appropriate approach when member States have not reached agreement on a realistic framework for seeking to negotiate a multilateral treaty.

In order to develop such a framework, member States would have to work out convincing answers to the key questions that I identified earlier. In other words, member States would need to believe that some new multilateral agreement actually would make an effective contribution to international peace and security, and that it also would not have adverse effects on national security. These conclusions, in turn, would have to be closely associated with cogent analysis of several key issues (in other words, mutual advantage, clear and practical focus on appropriate technical aspects, assurance of compliance, effective measures of enforcement).

These questions are highly complex. The answers certainly do not exist now, and the United States sees no reason to believe that they will suddenly become evident. To the contrary, we are firmly convinced that multilateral outcomes can only be the result of an extended process of transparency and engagement: transparency in regard to actions and goals, engagement in a joint search for practical solutions and mutual advantage. In that sincere and earnest search, there is no substitute, there can be no substitute for serious and thoughtful discussion. There should likewise be no doubt, that the United States delegation will engage, actively and energetically, in the work of all subordinate bodies that the Conference decides to establish.

(Mr. Javits, United States)

To permit any and all forms of active engagement, the Conference on Disarmament must finally get down to work. We have an agreed mandate for negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty. We have agreement in principle that member States can conduct broad-ranging discussion in ad hoc committees that will deal with the other two high-priority issues, nuclear disarmament and outer space. In addition, we all agree that the Conference's overall programme of work can include appropriate consideration of several other substantive and procedural topics. So let us seize on commitments and goals that we all share.

Mr. President, the international community's enhanced cooperation in the aftermath of 11 September gives us added reason to hope that every member State will agree to end the deadlock and have the wisdom to engage, thereby applying our collective energies to constructive and productive tasks. In that event, history would record that the Conference on Disarmament was ultimately destined to succeed, not to wither and fade away.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I thank the representative of the United States of America for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair.

Distinguished representatives, allow me to extend a warm welcome on behalf of the Conference and on my own behalf to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, Ms. Anna Lindh, who will address the Conference today. Her presence among us today is evidence of the personal interest which she takes in our deliberations and of the abiding importance that her country attaches to the Conference on Disarmament.

I am confident that we shall all listen to her statement with the utmost attention. In greeting the Minister, I should also like to express my personal appreciation for the collaboration and ongoing cooperation between our two countries in the domain of nuclear disarmament.

I now give the floor to Ms. Anna Lindh, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden.

Ms. LINDH (Sweden): Mr President, it is indeed a pleasure for me to be here to present Sweden's views on the international disarmament agenda and I want to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your important appointment at this crucial time.

Looking back, we have seen both progress and setbacks in our work for international disarmament and global security.

Progress, as multilateral arms control has produced impressive results, which we should not forget. Biological and chemical weapons, anti-personnel mines, and certain conventional weapons are all banned. A treaty on a ban on nuclear testing has been agreed, and the nuclear-weapon States have committed themselves to the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals.

(Ms. Lindh, Sweden)

But also setbacks, as the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction continues to threaten global security. Ballistic missile tests are carried out, and plans for a strategic missile defence create the risk of a new arms race. Setbacks, as terrorism has exposed how vulnerable the open society is to the brutal attacks of fanatical movements, supported and equipped by States and individuals who do not share our common democratic values. Setbacks, as every day civilians are maimed and killed in internal and regional conflicts and by anti-personnel mines and explosive remnants of war.

And to rich and poor, in North and South, the spread of and easy access to small arms and light weapons pose a growing threat in the hands of criminals and terrorists. The threats have different impact, but they have one thing in common - their consequences do not stay within national borders, but reach all of us. They are threats to our common security, and therefore require common responses.

International disarmament, non-proliferation and a world free of weapons of mass destruction are long-standing priorities for the Swedish Government. The future for all of us will depend on our ability and willingness to find common solutions to global challenges. This is evident not least after the terrorist attacks in September 2001. Such threats can only be met through international cooperation, as can other threats to human security and welfare, such as regional conflicts, discrimination, poverty and environmental problems. Our joint struggle against terrorism shows the power of common efforts. We must learn from this experience, never to let unilateral declarations and decisions prevail over multilateral agreements. Multilateral solutions are the only way forward.

I would now like to point out a number of issues where we have to improve our common efforts.

First, we must cooperate to rid the world of weapons of mass destruction. To stop the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery vehicles, we need global action. And our multilateral response must build on the already existing safety net against proliferation. There is an urgent need to strengthen the international framework and multilateral instruments in the field of non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control. We must promote their universal adherence and ensure their effective implementation. International as well as national security depends on sustainable multilateral frameworks.

The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) provides a firewall against the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and is really the foundation for nuclear disarmament. According to article VI of the NPT, each of the parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures for nuclear disarmament.

The NPT must include all States. There is no reason why any State should stand outside. I call on the only four States remaining outside - Cuba, India, Israel and Pakistan - to accede to the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States and to place their facilities under comprehensive safeguards agreements with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

(Ms. Lindh, Sweden)

In the year 2000 all 187 States Parties to the NPT agreed on a final document including an undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, and 12 other steps towards accomplishing that goal. The outcome was later strongly confirmed in the United Nations General Assembly.

Sweden believes that non-strategic nuclear weapons also should become an integral part of arms limitation and disarmament negotiations. We welcome the fact that commitments regarding non-strategic nuclear weapons were made at the NPT Review Conference for the first time at an international forum.

We also welcome the acknowledgement of the need both for increased transparency and irreversibility in relation to all nuclear disarmament measures, and we find it important further to develop verification capabilities to achieve and maintain a nuclear-weapon-free world. We support the search for more powerful and effective verification mechanisms, and we continue to support the important work of IAEA, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty Organization (CTBTO) and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW).

The 2000 NPT agreement is a blueprint to achieve nuclear disarmament. The New Agenda Coalition - a group of States with a common concern about the lack of progress in nuclear disarmament and a common vision of a nuclear-weapon-free world - was very active in reaching this agreement. Now we are determined to work for its implementation, in the review cycle leading up to the next Review Conference.

Sweden - through Ambassador Henrik Salander - will be chairing this year's session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2005 NPT Review Conference and will make every effort to launch a productive start of the next review cycle.

Second, we must cooperate to put a definite end to nuclear testing. All States would gain from adhering to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). It sets the threshold higher for the acquisition of nuclear weapons, prevents a qualitative arms race and builds confidence through its verification system. Its entry into force should not be delayed further. We have waited long enough.

The conference on facilitating the entry into force of the CTBT, held in New York some months ago, was a show-of-force in support of the Treaty. The overwhelming majority of States clearly wish nuclear testing to be a thing of the past. We deeply regret the decision by the United States Senate to reject the CTBT and regret that the United States Administration continues to oppose ratification of the CTBT. Once again, we call upon the United States to reconsider its position. We are also concerned about reports that the United States is planning to accelerate its test-readiness programme.

(Ms. Lindh, Sweden)

I call on all States which have not yet done so to adhere to the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. I also call especially on Algeria, China, Colombia, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Egypt, India, Indonesia, Iran, Israel, Pakistan, the United States and Viet Nam to ratify the Treaty and allow it to enter into force. Nuclear-testing should be consigned to the dustbin of history.

Third, we must cooperate to ensure compliance with international disarmament and non-proliferation agreements. In 1991, the United Nations Security Council set up a Special Commission to investigate the extensive Iraqi programmes on weapons of mass destruction and to monitor disarmament and arms control in Iraq. The task has now been taken over by the United Nations Monitoring and Verification Commission (UNMOVIC). Iraq has not fulfilled its obligations and still refuses to allow UNMOVIC access, which contributes to the destabilizing of regional and international peace and security. I call on Iraq to comply with its obligations under the United Nations Charter and resolution 1284 and to allow the international community to verify that there are no weapons of mass destruction in the country.

The additional protocol to the IAEA safeguards agreement was developed as a response to the clandestine nuclear weapons programme in Iraq. It is a major accomplishment and will help build trust that all States comply with their non-proliferation commitments. Sweden has completed the ratification procedure and the protocol will enter into force as soon as the few remaining European Union countries have ratified as planned. I hope that all States will conclude additional protocol agreements with the IAEA. When implemented, strengthened safeguards will have a very positive effect on the international non-proliferation system.

It is worrying that the IAEA is still unable to verify the correctness and completeness of the initial declaration of nuclear material made by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. This situation also risks complicating the implementation of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) project - a project that we fully support. I call upon the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to comply fully with its safeguards agreement and to cooperate fully and promptly with IAEA.

Fourth, we must cooperate to dismantle old systems, not to build new ones. Sweden has repeatedly expressed concern that a unilateral decision by the United States to develop a strategic missile defence risks having a negative impact on international disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. We are also concerned about the consequences of the American decision to withdraw from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM). We hope that the continuing consultations between the United States Administration and other countries will lead to an agreed solution that will contribute positively to disarmament and non-proliferation. At the same time, I want to stress that it is unacceptable that China is using the American missile defence plans as an argument for expanding its own nuclear arms programmes. It is contrary - as shown by the examples that I have mentioned - to what is needed today, and hardly consistent with that covered by article VI of the NPT. All parties should work for a strengthening of the international disarmament process.

(Ms. Lindh, Sweden)

The Swedish Government welcomes the announcements by the United States and the Russian Federation on substantial cuts in their strategic nuclear arsenals. These unilateral declarations should be formalized in a legally binding agreement including provisions ensuring irreversibility, verification and transparency. The nuclear warheads of the strategic reductions must be destroyed, not just placed in storage. The disarmament process must be made irreversible. The nuclear-weapon States have undertaken to apply this principle to nuclear disarmament. Furthermore, it is logical that the next step will be also to include tactical nuclear weapons in the disarmament process.

The technology and knowledge needed to produce ballistic missiles is rapidly spreading, often ending up in the wrong hands and threatening both our regional and global security and stability. The terrorist attacks of 11 September have pointed to the urgent need to prevent such weapons from reaching the hands of terrorist groups. Common efforts by all States are required. To regulate ballistic missiles, as means of delivery for weapons of mass destruction, should be an integral part of disarmament efforts.

We are convinced that a universal norm against missile proliferation must be established. To this end, we have, together with our partners in the European Union, actively participated in the preparation of the draft international code of conduct against ballistic missile proliferation. At this very moment the draft code is being advanced in a meeting in Paris. We will work with all interested countries for the adoption of this code during 2002 and for it to be considered in the United Nations.

Fifth, we must cooperate to uphold the complete ban on biological and chemical weapons. The tragic events during the last months have increased the fear of proliferation of biological weapons and of bioterrorism. It is therefore more important than ever to strengthen the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BWC) as one of the tools to ensure a safer world.

The more than 140 States parties to the BWC have for a long time worked to strengthen the Convention, but it still lacks a verification mechanism. Last year was a disappointment. Our position on the proposed protocol that was presented last spring is known. We believe that the benefits far outweighed the costs, and were more than willing to support it, but consensus could unfortunately not be reached. We regret the United States position on the proposed protocol. The States parties to the Convention also failed to strengthen the Convention at the Fifth Review Conference and, instead, the Conference came to a temporary halt. I urge all States parties to be active and constructive when the Conference is resumed in November and to reach a result that will multilaterally strengthen the Convention.

The Convention on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, and the organization supervising its implementation, have now been in force for almost five years. During this time the world has seen real progress in ensuring non-proliferation, and has started the process of

(Ms. Lindh, Sweden)

destroying all chemical weapons. For the first time in history, we can actually rid the world of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. It is important that the deadlines set up under the Convention are respected and that States can be confident that the weapons have been destroyed and not merely diverted.

Sixth, we must cooperate on disarmament and arms control also in the field of conventional weapons. Weapons of mass destruction create a fear of the ultimate catastrophe among us. Still, we have to remember that conventional weapons are an ever-present threat to the lives and well-being of people in many parts of the world.

In Cambodia, Bosnia, Afghanistan and other places, children still risk being killed by anti-personnel mines while playing. In the Middle East, the escalating violence has become a cruel and threatening part of everyday life. In many countries and conflicts, the life of a human being is worth less than a bullet.

We must take special measures against conventional weapons that are particularly inhumane or have indiscriminate effects. The Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons was created to protect us from such weapons. One of the challenges today concerns explosive remnants of war. We are all well aware of the humanitarian consequences of the use of landmines, but otherwise legitimate weapons that fail to explode and remain on the ground as a threat to the local population have similar consequences. We welcome the decision by the Second Review Conference to mandate a group of governmental experts to study this issue and we hope that negotiations on a protocol on explosive remnants of war will start as soon as possible. We are also pleased that the scope of the Convention was extended to include internal conflicts.

The rapid entry into force of the Ottawa Convention and its large number of States parties has led to an international norm against the use, production, stockpiling and transfer of anti-personnel mines. But some States continue to stay outside the framework of the Convention. I call upon those States to adhere to the Convention so that we can rid the world of anti-personnel mines.

In today's world, terrorists, criminals and drug-lords thrive from the widespread availability, rapid accumulation and easy flow of small arms. They contribute to the escalation and prolonging of conflicts and weakening of already fragile societies. Sweden remains committed and active in the struggle against the adverse effects of small arms together with our partners in the European Union.

Regional commitments have been made and the foundation for global action is there. We now have to implement our commitments on stricter export controls and develop international instruments on marking, tracing and brokering. We need to improve management of stockpiles, and to destroy surplus arms. We are deeply engaged in concerted actions at the international level and support a number of small arms projects around the world.

(Ms. Lindh, Sweden)

These days we are all giving our attention to the devastating situation in Afghanistan. The international community is now making great efforts to assist the Afghan people after the Taliban regime, when it is at last time for reconciliation and the rebuilding of their war-torn country. Afghanistan is the latest, but surely not the last, example of a disintegrated society marked by violence, where we specifically need to work in the field of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants.

We have a fruitful cooperation with Norway and Canada in this field and have, together with the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations, contributed to international courses in Zimbabwe, Canada, Sweden and Ghana. These courses have facilitated the establishment of a pool of professionals who can be used in post-conflict situations all over the world.

Finally, Mr. President, we must cooperate to use our common instruments better. Last year proved to be another year of standstill and stalemate for the Conference on Disarmament. This is highly regrettable.

It is necessary to break the deadlock in the Conference on Disarmament and get down to substantive work. It is unacceptable when nuclear-weapon States, with their special responsibility, deny the rest of the international community access to this important forum. It is not acceptable to delay the work programme by artificial links between different topics.

There is a sound basis for a balanced work programme and we believe that the Amorim proposal should be acceptable to all and are ready to start working in accordance with this proposal. It is time to start negotiations on a treaty banning the production of fissile material (FMCT). Such a treaty will be a vital tool in halting the development of new nuclear weapons. It is time to establish a subsidiary body to deal with nuclear disarmament. This would be in line with the NPT process and the necessity of implementing the 13 steps for nuclear disarmament. It is time to deal with prevention of an arms race in outer space (PAROS). This is important as we see worrying signs of an increased interest in a militarization of outer space.

The Swedish Government is still hopeful that the Conference on Disarmament will be able to surmount these obstacles very soon. But we must all make special efforts to overcome the stalemate. I strongly urge you to explore all possibilities to start substantive work, and I call on all concerned States to show flexibility: fulfil your role as the only multilateral forum for negotiating disarmament! We need you and we need the progress!

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I thank the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden for her statement and for her kind worlds addressed to the Chair. I see that the Ambassador of Myanmar is asking for the floor. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. MYA THAN (Myanmar): Mr. President, we are indeed honoured to have among us Her Excellency Ms. Anna Lindh, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, who has just made a very important and substantive statement on disarmament issues. We have listened with great interest to her statement and have taken due note of its contents. We also have followed with great interest the important statements made by our colleagues at the plenary meeting this morning.

Allow me to begin by expressing the deep appreciation of my delegation of the effective manner in which you have been conducting the proceedings in the Conference on Disarmament. We pledge our fullest cooperation with you in your efforts to advance the Conference's work.

Mr. President, I wish to convey through you, to Minister Fayza Aboulnaga, our warm regards and best wishes for every success in her future endeavours. She has been our close friend. She has made distinctive contributions to the work of the Conference on Disarmament. We all miss her in this forum. A number of other colleagues have also left since the 2001 session of the Conference last year. We wish them all the best.

I should also like to welcome to our midst the new arrivals: Ambassador Luiz Felipe de Seixas Corrêa of Brazil, Ambassador Mohammad Reza Alborzi of Iran, Ambassador Omar Hilale of Morocco, Ambassador Tim Caughley of New Zealand, Ambassador Leonid Skotnikov of the Russian Federation, Ambassador Carlos Miranda of Spain, Ambassador David Broucher of the United Kingdom, and Ambassador Eric M. Javits of the United States of America. Some of them are our long-time close friends; some are new. We look forward to working closely with them all and wish them fruitful tenures in Geneva.

Mr. President, I shall defer my general statement to a more opportune time. This morning I should like to offer a few brief comments and suggestions.

My delegation wishes to associate itself fully with the statement of the Group of 21, delivered by the Group Coordinator, Ambassador Camilo Reyes Rodriguez of Colombia, on 31 January 2002.

There is a great interest a well as a strong desire on the part of the member States of the Conference on Disarmament to maintain its credibility as the sole multilateral negotiating forum dealing with disarmament and to overcome the current paralysis in the work of the Conference and start substantive work as soon as possible. We therefore fully support you, Mr. President, in your efforts to reach consensus on a programme of work through intensive consultations and to start substantive work at the earliest possible date. These intensive consultations on a programme of work should continue with sustained momentum until we have overcome the current impasse with a view to making progress on substantive issues in the Conference on Disarmament.

(Mr. Mya Than, Myanmar)

While doing so, in the absence of consensus on a programme of work, we will do well to explore other avenues that will enable the Conference to carry out useful work on other issues which can facilitate and contribute to its substantive work. In this context, we believe that the Conference should now consider appointing three special coordinators, namely, a special coordinator on improved and effective functioning, a special coordinator on the expansion of the membership of the Conference and a special coordinator on the review of the agenda, to carry out their respective functions during the 2002 session of the Conference on Disarmament and to report to the Conference on their work.

I am happy to learn that you have yourself started consultations on the appointment of the three special coordinators. It is a timely step, as we are already in the third week of the 2002 session. We fully support you in this regard.

Last year, the Conference on Disarmament appointed three special coordinators on those same subjects and the special coordinators carried out useful work and submitted their respective reports to the Conference during its 2001 session. We should continue this useful exercise at the 2002 session as well. Earlier on, at the plenary meeting this morning, my dear colleague Chris Westdal has already voiced his support for the appointment of the three special coordinators. I believe that consensus is emerging on the appointment of the three special coordinators.

We also lend our support to your endeavours to find ways of making use of the provisions in paragraph 5 (d) of CD/1036 to appoint a special coordinator or special coordinators to deal with the substantive items on the agenda.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I thank the Ambassador for his statement and for the kind words addressed to the Chair. I shall of course convey your kind words to Egypt's Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. The Ambassador of Iraq has asked for the floor. You have the floor, Sir.

Mr. AL-NIMA (Iraq) (translated from Arabic): In the Name of God, Merciful, the Compassionate! Mr. President, I should like to begin by saluting the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden for taking the trouble to attend our Conference and to make the comprehensive statement to which we listened with great care. The Minister's statement touched upon fundamental and important issues and contained ideas that merit closer examination. We have every confidence that the Conference will pay due attention to her statement.

I should like to clarify something for the Minister, not in response to her statement, but insofar as she referred to my country, Iraq. She referred to an assessment that Iraq had not fulfilled its obligations relating to the destruction, removal and rendering harmless of weapons of mass destruction. Unfortunately that assessment was clearly not based on a detailed analysis of the facts of the case, nor on an independent evaluation that took account of different points of

(Mr. Al-Nima, Iraq)

view on the subject. In its dialogue with the Secretary-General in February last year, Iraq presented a written statement of its position concerning Iraq's compliance with all its commitments under Security Council resolution 687 (1991), section C, concerning the destruction, removal and rendering harmless of weapons of mass destruction. We would have hoped that the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs or the relevant department therein might have studied that document in order to understand Iraq's point of view. Iraq firmly believes that it has complied with its obligations under the section in question and would have liked the Security Council to take an objective stance in order to carry out an impartial assessment of our compliance with those commitments. Because of the position of influential members of the Security Council, however, the Council has been unable to conduct that assessment and has been regularly prevented from doing so because influential States wish to maintain the embargo. Any objective assessments of Iraq's compliance with its commitments vis-à-vis disarmament would mean an end to the embargo and this is what they do not want. This is what I wanted to say. I once more salute the Minister and thank you, Mr. President.

Mr. CASTILLO (Cuba) (translated from Spanish): Mr. President, I would like to associate myself with previous speakers in welcoming Her Excellency the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden, who has presented a very wide-ranging and comprehensive statement and has expressed legitimate concerns that we fully share. Allow me to repeat that: we fully share all the concerns that she expressed.

Mr. President, my country has kept firmly to its principles and has taken a constructive position with regard to all international disarmament instruments. As a developing country we need peace. For countries like mine, war is not a commercial business.

Mr. President, please believe that, when multilateralism prevails over unilateral designs, when the international community it its entirety, without exception, without discrimination and on an equal footing, takes real steps towards general and complete disarmament, when the threats against our sovereignty and against our territorial integrity disappear, then you may rest assured, Mr. President and Madam Minister for Foreign Affairs, that Cuba will unhesitatingly go along with all the initiatives to which you have referred. Thank you.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): Does any other delegation wish to take the floor at this stage? The distinguished Ambassador of China has the floor.

Mr. HU (China) (translated from Chinese): I have listened with close attention to the statement that has just been delivered by the distinguished Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden. While I fully agree with many of the points that she has raised, there are a small number on which I beg to differ. But I must draw attention here to the last part of her statement, where she makes reference to China's nuclear weapons programme. On the question of nuclear weapons, China has always exercised maximum restraint. Our nuclear force both at present and in the future will always be limited to the minimum level essential for the purpose of safeguarding our national security and sovereignty. The allegation by the distinguished Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden is entirely unfounded. My delegation cannot accept that statement.

Mr. RI THAE GUN (Democratic People's Republic of Korea): I would like to join other representatives in welcoming the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sweden and, like other representatives, I would also like to say that most of the speech made by the Minister was correct and we appreciate that contribution.

In the interests of saving time, I would just like to make a very small comment on her remarks about my country. She said that, because of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the KEDO project is in danger of delay. This is a complete misunderstanding and misinterpretation, because, under the agreement signed between the United States and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, we have certain steps. When the KEDO reaches a certain stage, then the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has another obligation to fulfil. This is envisaged in the agreement. The problem is that, even though the Democratic People's Republic of Korea fulfilled its obligations under the agreement, KEDO intentionally delays its project, and that is why the Democratic People's Republic of Korea has not been able to take another step. That is the main block. This is the issue to be settled.

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea appreciates the peaceful policy of Sweden and respects its policy. We are not against any aspect of the policy of the Conference on Disarmament. We respect the policy of Sweden as a peace-loving country. But this statement is based, I believe, on wrong information and information which is derived from the other side, against my country.

The PRESIDENT (translated from Arabic): I see no delegation asking for the floor. The next plenary meeting of the Conference will be held on Thursday, 14 February 2002 at 10 a.m., in this room.

The meeting rose at 12.25 p.m.